

THE SUMMER IN TAIZÉ

Simple
and Essential

"To struggle against hatred," was the invitation addressed to all by Solt Pal, the Hungarian president of the UN commission on human rights, who spent a few days in Taizé in August while the commission was holding a special session in Geneva on account of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The entire summer in Taizé was deeply marked by the call not to run away from the vocation to seek reconciliation.

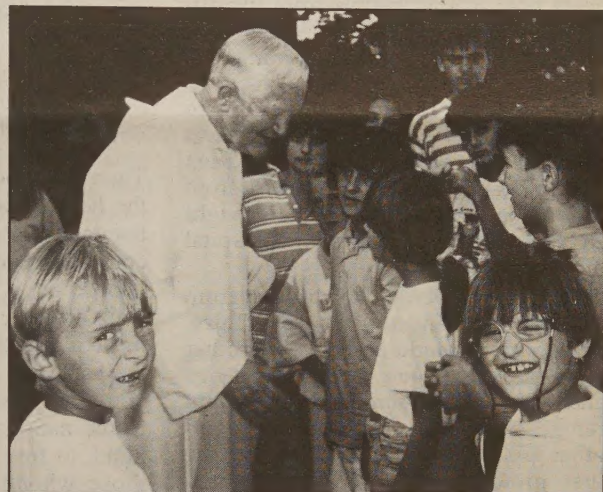
All the young people present in Taizé, from the North of Finland to Greece and Albania, from Britain to Ukraine, were aware of this urgency in a Europe plagued by war. Those from other continents bore witness to the force of the Gospel lived at the heart of difficulties, and their presence supported this search for reconciliation throughout the human family. This spirit of reconciliation found a concrete echo during the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY FOR A
WEEK IN TAIZÉ

The Archbishop of Canterbury the primate of the Church of England, George Carey, spent a week in Taizé from August 23-29. He was accompanied by a thousand young Anglicans. Upon his arrival he explained the meaning of his coming: "First I thought I would go to Taizé to give a teaching to the young Anglicans. Then I said to myself that it was more important to go as they do, as a pilgrim." And he added: "I have come to Taizé on pilgrimage because it is a place of generosity and reconciliation. The divisions between Christians are a burden that I bear; they need to be healed. I believe in reconciliation with the Catholic Church and I would like to see it happen in my lifetime."

The thousand young Anglicans participated in the week of meetings, mixing with young adults from other nation. The

Children from Bosnia in Taizé: As at the beginning of the community (then it was children marked by World War II), children are staying in a house in the village. See page 2.



Archbishop took part in the three daily prayers. Each morning, he listened to the Bible introduction given by one of the brothers of the community. In the afternoon, he met with the young Anglicans in small groups. He took all his meals with Brother Roger and the other brothers, which provided an opportunity to share ideas. On Thursday, August 27, in the presence of the 5000 young people who were in Taizé for the week, the Archbishop spoke the following words:

"Peter said to Jesus: Lord, it is good to be here!" (Matthew 17,1-9, the transfiguration of Christ). These words of Peter on the mount of Transfiguration capture our feelings as we worship on this mount here in Burgundy. Hundreds of young Anglicans from all parts of Europe and even from as far away as South Africa, Hong Kong and Taiwan have joined me on pilgrimage. (...) We have looked beyond ourselves to see "no one but Jesus only." Perhaps this is the essential genius of Taizé. We are taken out of ourselves and directed to Jesus Christ. (...)

"It is tempting to reflect Peter's spontaneous response to his transfigured Lord: 'Lord, it is good to be here. Let us make three tents and stay here for ever!' Of course, some are called to remain here at Taizé to live the community life. But most of us are not called to be on the mount for ever. The transfiguration gave the disciples a new sense of direction. (...) From Taizé, our Lord takes us by the hand and walks with us down into the valley-

back into the world in which sorrow is mixed with joy, where wars between countries are matched by conflicts within our personal lives. The special privilege and vocation of the Brothers is to point us back into the everyday world which must be the focus of reconciliation. What do they give to us?

"First, Taizé is a simple community. My initial impression was that the buildings were only half-finished. Everything seemed makeshift. But the buildings are not meant to last for centuries. Taizé is not a symbol of permanence. That is deliberate. So simple; so basic. And the liturgy has been like that: simple songs, simple prayers, short passages of scripture drawing us all into the heart of the gospel — Jesus Christ our Lord. This is the challenge of simplicity. Have we made church life too complicated and obscured the person of Christ? (...) Second, Taizé is a praying community. My life, like yours, is full of busyness. (...) Taizé has reminded me of the importance of giving space to God. I have felt God saying to me: 'Don't be in too much of a hurry. Stay here awhile with me. I am with you. Listen to me.' (...)

"Third, Taizé is an accepting community. How international it is! The barriers of language and geography are overcome by our unity in Christ. Many different Christian traditions are here but they are transcended by our oneness in our Lord. (...)

"Finally, Taizé is a hopeful community. (...) Many years ago God took Brother Roger's simple obedience and out of it has come this miracle. What a parable for us to take away: that God's church will never die as long as there are Christians who obediently follow the Lord's calling. (...)

Taizé

European Meeting
of young adults28 December 1992
- 2 January 1993

Vienna

**For the preparation :
a "night of lights"
pages 2 and 3,
practical information
pages 7 and 8.**

"But let me last of all address Brother Roger and the Community. You have refreshed us, but what message of refreshment have I for you? It is the same word that the gospel addresses us all: Keep your eyes fixed on him and his love; stay Christ-centred and prophetic; stay youthful and keep listening to God and his world."

CHILDREN FROM BOSNIA IN TAIZE

The links between Taizé and the former Yugoslavia go back a long way. For twenty years now brothers of Taizé, or young people sent by the community, have been coming and going to support those experiencing trials there. For years now, young people from the different regions have been coming to Taizé or to the European meetings according to their possibilities. This year, brothers have made several trips to Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, as well as to Sarajevo. Transports of food have been sent to Bosnia. And young people from Voivodina who were in Taizé brought back with them medicines for a hospital in their region.

In August, twenty-one children from the region of Sarajevo arrived in Taizé. They were brought back by a brother who had spent time living in Sarajevo and with Bosnian families who sought refuge in Croatia. In September, another group of children arrived, and the first group went back to join their mothers in Zagreb.

As at the beginning of the community (then it was children who had suffered from the Second World War), the children are staying in a house in the village of Taizé. Those who take care of them have noticed that, soon after their arrival, they stopped drawing pictures of tanks and destroyed churches and drew flowers and butterflies instead.

A priest working with Caritas in Sarajevo said recently, "When the war began in our country, the first appeal we made was to Taizé, at the beginning of the year. And the first lorry full of food that arrived after our appeal came from Taizé."

This solidarity will continue; you can take part by sending a contribution to: UK: "Operation Hope," Bank Account no. 44495090, Coutts and Co., Duncan-non Branch, 440 Strand, LONDON WC2R 0QS. USA: "Operation Hope," c/o Taizé, 413 West 48th Street, New York NY 10036. IRELAND, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA, etc.: contributions may be sent in the same way as sums for subscriptions to the Letter from Taizé, making sure to indicate with your payment "for Operation Hope."

A Night of Light

I.

The rising sun comes to visit us, a light from above shining on those lying in the shadow of death.

Song

De noche...

Reading

Thus says the Lord God, who created the heavens and spread them out, who hammered into shape the earth and what comes from it, who gave breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk on it: I, the Lord, have called you in saving justice, I have grasped you by the hand and shaped you; I have made you a covenant of the people and light to the nations, to open the eyes of the blind, to free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness from the dungeon.

(Isaiah 42,5-7)

Song

Our darkness is never darkness in your sight...

Reading

By the faithful love of our God, the rising Sun will come from above to visit us, to give light to those who live in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

(Luke 1,78-79)

Song

Within our darkest night...

Silence

Intercessions

with "Gospodi pomiluj" or "Kyrie eleison" sung after each one

- Living God, you are light, in you there is no darkness.
- Stay close to all who are hopeless or discouraged.
- Bring peace and justice to our lands.
- Grant understanding and forgiveness to all the nations.
- For all who suffer from war and violence, especially for the peoples of, we pray to you.

- For the victims of racism and xenophobia, especially for, we pray to you.
- For those who have had to flee from their homes, for refugees, for those who must live in exile, we pray to you.
- For the starving and the homeless, we pray to you.
- For those who are lonely, both young and old, we pray to you.
- For the outcast, for the sick, for the dying, we pray to you.
- For those persecuted for their convictions or their faith, we pray to you.
- In your Son, no one is excluded from your love; by your Spirit, your love has been sent into our hearts, we pray to you.

(petitions can be added for more specific concerns)

Song

Misericordias Domini...

Prayer

Christ Jesus, you wish inner distress for no one. And you come to shed light in us on the deep mystery of human suffering. By it, we come closer to an intimacy with God. Holy Spirit, Comforter, enable us to alleviate the pain of the innocent and to be attentive to those who, in situations of trial, radiate by their lives the holiness of Christ Jesus.

(Prayer of Brother Roger)

Song

The Lord is my light...

(at this time the prayer around the Cross can be proposed, to entrust to Christ our own burdens and those of others)

II.

A light shining in the darkness

Song

Jesus, your light...

During this song, children can light a lamp (an oil lamp, or else the paschal candle or candles on a candelabra)

Reading

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of gloom — on them light has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder. For the yoke that burdened them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken... For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful-Counselor, Mighty-God, Everlasting-Father, Prince-of-Peace.

(Isaiah 9,2-6)

Song

Jubilate Deo...

Song of Acclamation

with "Alleluia" sung after each verse:

- O Christ, radiance of the Father's love, you are the true light shining on us all...
- O Christ, born into the world to save humanity and announce the new creation: free us from all that keeps us captive...
- O Christ, you came into the world not to be served, but to serve and to give your life for all...
- O Christ, begotten by the Father before time began, born in the stable of Bethlehem: help us live in the spirit of poverty...
- O Christ, you shared our human nature: strengthen us all who fall down on the road...
- O Christ, born humble and poor: remember those who are humiliated...
- O Christ, born of the Virgin Mary: recreate our lives and make us all temples of the Spirit...
- O Christ, eternal Lord, God-with-us: your Spirit is constantly active in each one of us: enable us to recognize its presence.
- O Christ, you gladden us by your light and you enlighten us by your coming: may we root our lives in the mystery of your presence...

Prayer

Christ Jesus, however little we know of your Gospel, it is light in our midst. However little we grasp of your presence, it is light for us. Christ Jesus, we search for you at times haltingly, but you have already come. You bring light to our worries. You know that we never want to choose darkness but always to welcome your inner light.

(Prayer by Brother Roger)

Song

In the Lord...

III

All will see the light

Song:

Jesus, your light...

During this song, each person lights their candle from the central light, which symbolizes the Risen Christ.

Reading

Is not this the fast that I choose, says the Lord: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindication shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am! If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

(Isaiah 58,6-10)

Song

Ubi caritas...

Reading

Jesus said: You are the light of the world. A city set on top of a hill cannot be hidden. And no one lights a lamp to place it under a basket, but rather puts it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way let your light shine out, so that people may see the good you do and give glory to your Father in heaven.

(Matthew 5,14-16)

Intercessions

with "Veni lumen cordium" sung after each one

- Holy Spirit, Comforter, by you we are born to live as children of God: Come to us, Holy Spirit!
- Holy Spirit, with Mary and the apostles, you make us witnesses to the resurrection of Christ: remember your Church...
- Holy Spirit, you liberate in us energies of kindness to forgive: gather us together in your love...
- Holy Spirit, you awaken our hearts to the realities of the Gospel: gather us together in your love...
- Holy Spirit, inner light, you bring our hearts back to the wellspring of life: gather us together in your love...

- Holy Spirit, you enable us to regain vitality: gather us together in your love...
- Holy Spirit, you send us to proclaim the Gospel: help us live in solidarity with the poor and the outcast...
- Holy Spirit, you send us as ferments of peace: gather us together in your love...
- Holy Spirit, you turn our lives into the dwelling of God: gather us together in your love...
- Holy Spirit, by baptism you have clothed us in a new garment which is Christ himself: gather us together in your love...

Our Father

Prayer

Christ Jesus, inner Light, you came not to judge the world but so that, through you, the Risen Lord, every human being might be saved, reconciled. And when the love that forgives becomes a fire burning within, then our hearts, even though tested, can begin to live anew.

(Prayer by Brother Roger)

Song

Jubilate coeli...

The prayer can continue for a while with other songs.

The preparation for the meeting in Vienna is rooted in prayer. In addition to regular local prayers, in some places a larger celebration is being organized to bring together people of different churches and even from different towns. At the heart of our faith, the celebration of the Risen Christ reminds us that he is the "light that comes to enlighten every person" (John 1). Proposing this prayer centred on the light of Christ is a way of being attentive to all who are far away from faith; it is also a way of praying in communion with all who are looking for a light in the depths of their night of loneliness or suffering. The elements proposed here can also be used separately on different occasions.

"Look, I am making all things new!"

At the beginning of his ministry, one day Jesus goes into the synagogue of Capharnaum to teach (Mark 1,21-28). But all of a sudden, in the midst of this traditional scene, the unexpected happens: "And his teaching made a deep impression on them, for he taught them with authority... The people were so astonished that they asked one another what it all meant, saying, 'Here is a new teaching, with authority behind it!'" (v. 22,27). Jesus is the bearer of something new and amazing, which Mark describes with the word "authority." Far from being "empty words," the words Jesus speaks have an effect: they are able to banish the forces of evil and restore a fullness of life to a suffering individual.

This image of something new suddenly appearing to overturn the habitual course of events can be seen as the "signature" of the God of the Bible. The very opposite of a distant sovereign comfortably seated on his throne, God constantly comes to human beings to open brand-new horizons for them.

Already in the Hebrew Scriptures, our "Old Testament," we find the heart of Israel's faith in the story of the Exodus, the memory of a God who freed enslaved persons from the yoke of the Egyptians and gave them a land and a future (Deut 26,5-10). Here, what is new is not that a god wages war for his people (that was a common belief of the time) but in the overturning of the law of "might makes right": those who were without means, even without an identity, received as a free gift a life beyond all their hopes. And Israel was aware of the unique character of God's intervention on its behalf (Deut 4,32-34). So unique, in fact, that it carried with it the permanent temptation to see God's choice as a privilege and not as the consequence of an undeserved love (Deut 7,6-8) bestowing a greater responsibility.

This new thing accomplished by God in the world is at the same time a call that awakens a response. That is the authentic meaning of the divine commandments for the chosen people: they are a way of responding to God for what he has done for them, of keeping alive a relationship with God so as to receive happiness and life (Deut 6,20-25). But still more basic is an attitude by which human beings open the depths of their heart to God and welcome the new reality they are offered. This attitude, which can be called faith or trust, has nothing automatic about it. It is not easy to root one's life in a reality which one cannot control. Suffering (Ex 6,9) and fear of the unknown (Ex 32,1) can destroy trust in God, and too much prosperity can take away the desire to risk one's life with no tangible guarantees (Deut 8,7-18).

When the People of God, lulled to sleep by the comforts of an easy life, begins to forget the source of its life, individuals arise to remind it of this essential trust. Thus the prophet Isaiah criticizes the superficial religiosity of the nation (Isa 29,13-14) and its confidence in the earthly power of Egypt (Isa 31,1-3). His successor Jeremiah even attacks one of the most sacred institutions of Israel, the great Temple built by King Solomon in Jerusalem. He has nothing against the building in itself; what he is against is the foolish attempt to find one's security in it rather than trying to do what God wants (Jer 7,1-11). Unfortunately for those who placed their trust in that place, in the near future the nation is invaded by the Babylonians, the city and its Temple destroyed and its leaders sent into exile.

At this moment when the fortunes of the people are at their lowest ebb, a prophet arises in the land of captivity who understands with greater depth and clarity God's identity and activity. This prophet, usually called Second

Isaiah (Isa 40-55), speaks to people tempted by despair and nostalgia for a bygone era. And so, after having mentioned the event of the Exodus which took place centuries earlier, he continues: "No need to remember past events, no need to think about what was done before. Look, I am doing something new, now it emerges: can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the desert..." (Isa 43,18-19). He realizes that the same God who liberated his people in the past is still present to accomplish a similar deed today. Although the prophet is against any flight towards an imaginary past, he urges his countrymen to "remember" (Isa 44,21) what God did in the past so as better to discern God's presence in the present moment.

To speak of the "new thing" God is doing now, Second Isaiah uses the verb "to create" (Isa 48,7; 41,20; 45,8). For him, the work of creation was not only "in the beginning": God is always the Creator, precisely because he always does something new in coming into the world. Thus the prophet uses images of creation (water in the desert, trees blossoming...) to describe the "new Exodus," the return from exile (Isa 41,17-20; 43,19-20; 44,3-4; 49,10; 51,3; 55,13): the salvation God brings is essentially an act of creation.

And this prophet tells his listeners: "Sing to the Lord a new song..." (42,10; cf. Ps 98,1; Rev 5,9; 14,3). He is not referring to a melody that has never been sung before: the song is new because it arises from hearts touched by the "new thing" God is doing. And it is not limited to human beings but possesses a cosmic (today we would say an ecological) dimension: the entire universe is invited to take part in an explosion of joy and praise which marks the passing of the God who makes all things new (Isa 44,23; 49,13; 55,12). ¶

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

NOVEMBER

JOHANNINE HOURS

MATTHEW 13,31-33

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

1 SUN ALL SAINTS
Jesus's disciples came to him and he taught them saying: Happy are the poor in spirit, the kingdom of heaven is theirs.

2 MON While we live, as when we die, we belong to the Lord. For Christ died and returned to life so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

3 TUE Jesus said: The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.

4 WED We do not know how to pray properly, but the Spirit comes to help us in our weakness and intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

5 THU Who could condemn Jesus? Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God, interceding for us.

6 FRI In one of Jesus' parables, the master says to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets of the town and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. Press people to come in so that my house be full.

7 SAT Paul writes: God never revokes his gifts or his call.

8 SUN Jesus said: God is not a God of the dead but of the living; for him all people are alive.

9 MON Do not model yourselves on the pattern of this world, but let yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern the will of God.

10 TUE Paul writes: May your love be sincere, cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

11 WED Coming to his senses, the prodigal son said: I will leave this place and go to my Father and say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son." But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him.

12 THU St. Paul writes: Love does no harm to one's neighbour, and so love is the fulfillment of the Law.

13 FRI Paul writes: Let us put aside the deeds of darkness. Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.

14 SAT Jesus said: "Up to the time of John the Baptist, it was the Law and the Prophets; from then onwards the kingdom of God has been preached and everyone is forcing their way into it."

15 SUN Jesus said to his disciples: You will be persecuted because of my name. But make up your mind not to worry about how to defend yourselves, for I shall give you words and wisdom.

16 MON May the God of perseverance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves following the example of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and one voice you may glorify God.

17 TUE Accept one another just as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God.

18 WED Jesus said: The coming of the kingdom of God cannot be observed, for the kingdom of God is among you.

19 THU I am confident that the One who began a good work in you will go on completing it until the day of Christ Jesus comes.

20 FRI Paul writes: I pray that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best.

21 SAT St Paul wrote from prison: Nothing shall defeat me. I shall keep my confidence now, as always; Christ will be glorified in my body, whether I live or die.

22 SUN The criminal said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus answered him, "In truth I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

23 MON St. Paul writes: Stand firm, one in mind and spirit, striving side by side for the faith of the Gospel.

24 TUE Jesus said to a man: You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.

25 WED Jesus said: There is no one who has left house, wife, brothers, parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who will not receive many times as much in this age and, in the world to come, eternal life.

26 THU Paul writes: God works in you to will and act according to his good purpose so that you may become children of God with your light shining out like stars in the midst of the world.

27 FRI For Christ I have accepted the loss of all other things – I look on them as rubbish so that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

28 SAT Paul writes: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

29 SUN ADVENT Jesus said to his disciples: Stand ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

30 MON St ANDREW Paul writes: For me, preaching the Gospel is not something to boast about, it is a necessity.

Johannine hours are meant as a way of seeking God in silence and prayer in the midst of our daily life. During the course of a day, take an hour or so to read the Bible passage with the short commentary and to reflect on the questions which follow. Afterwards, a group of 3 to 10 people can meet to share what they have discovered and perhaps for a time of prayer.

Two parables with the same theme, one from a man's work, the other from a woman's work.

The beginnings of Jesus' life and ministry were so humble that people could have paid no attention, just as no one notices a mustard seed. But it grew like "a tree that shelters the birds of the air." today, across the earth, countless people find in Christ, in the communion of believers that is his body, peace of heart and meaning for their life.

The comparison with yeast helps us see that Christ's activity is still more surprising: yeast is so closely mixed with the dough that it is impossible to separate or see it. In this way Christ, even without being recognized, never stops acting from within throughout the entire human family.

But the two parables also describe the life of each one of us. We have few resources, and our faith may be mixed with unbelief. But even faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. A poor prayer, a gesture of reconciliation or sharing, a little time and effort devoted to the disadvantaged, to children or elderly persons, are like mustard seeds that will turn into trees, like yeast that will slowly but surely transform the life of those around us.

- Where have I observed how something very small that I was able to do began to matter for others?
- What signs of hope do I see around me, promises of a new future?

To go further:
1 Kings 17,7-16; John 6,1-15

MEDITATING ON THE WORD

DECEMBER

JOHANNINE HOURS

JOHN 10,10B-10

These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the one in bold type is suggested.

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1 TUE In a vision, Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord say, "Whom shall I send?" And he answered, "Here I am, send me."

2 WED Turning to his disciples, Jesus said: Blessed are the eyes that see what you see!

3 THU Jesus took the seven loaves and the fish, gave thanks, broke them and gave them to his disciples, and they gave them to the crowd. They all ate their fill.

4 FRI Isaiah said: On that day there shall be no more hurt or violence, for the land will be filled with the knowledge of God as the water covers the bottom of the sea.

5 SAT The angel said to Zechariah, father of John the Baptist: Your wife will bear you a son who will be great in the sight of the Lord. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit and will bring back many people to the Lord their God.

6 SUN John the Baptist came as the prophet Isaiah had said: A voice of one calling in the desert, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight."

7 MON Joyfully you will draw water from the springs of salvation, and you will say, "Praise the Lord and call on his name. Proclaim his deeds to the nations!"

8 TUE God, who guides all things according to his will, has chosen us to be, for the praise of his glory, the people who would put their hopes in Christ.

9 WED Lord, you have been a refuge for the weak, a shelter for the needy in distress.

10 THU On that day, it will be said: Look, this is our God; we put our hope in him and he saved us. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.

11 FRI My soul longs for you in the night, Lord, and deep within me, my spirit seeks you.

12 SAT Isaiah said: You who dwell in the dust, wake up and sing for joy: your dead will live.

13 SUN Jesus said of John the Baptist: He is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you to prepare your way.

14 MON The Lord says: See, I am laying a foundation stone for my people. And I will take justice for a measure and righteousness as a level.

15 TUE When the Lord comes, the deaf will hear the words of the book and, delivered from shadows and darkness, the eyes of the blind will see. The poor and resourceless will discover ever more joy in God.

16 WED The Lord says: Your salvation is in returning and rest, your strength lies in calm and trust.

17 THU Shout for joy, you heavens; earth exult! For the Lord is consoling his people and having compassion on his afflicted ones.

18 FRI The Lord says: The days are coming, when I shall raise up an upright Branch, and in his days my people will be saved. And this is the name he will be called: "The Lord our Righteousness."

19 SAT You need to persevere. For in just a very little while, he who is coming will come - he will not delay.

20 SUN The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means "God-with-us".

21 MON Your God is with you. He will quiet you with his love, he will dance with joy for you.

22 TUE Elizabeth said to Mary: Blessed is she who believed that the promise the Lord made her would be fulfilled.

23 WED Mary said: The Lord has come to the help of his servant, being mindful of his faithful love as he promised to our ancestors.

24 THU To us a child is born, to us a son is given. And this is the name he has been given: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

25 FRI CHRISTMAS When they had seen the baby Jesus in the manger, the shepherds made known what they had been told concerning him and everyone who heard was astonished. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

26 SAT St STEPHEN Jesus said: Truly, I tell you, the one who makes himself humble like a little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

27 SUN Jesus said to his first disciples, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people." And at once they left their nets and followed him.

28 MON God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through him.

29 TUE The plans I have for you, says the Lord, are plans for peace not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. When you seek me, you shall find me, for you will seek me with all your heart.

30 WED Jesus said: This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

31 THU Though you have not seen Christ Jesus, you love him. Still without seeing him you believe in him and so are already filled with a joy so glorious it cannot be described.

Like a shepherd, Christ accomplishes a twofold task: he takes care of each one and he brings all together. He gives the fullness of life to each one in particular, not neglecting anyone, even those who get lost; he does not punish them but rather does all he can to find them. And to gather together into communion, he centres his teaching on mutual love. On the cross, when apparently he can do nothing, he continues to gather by refusing to view those who torture him as enemies. Risen from the dead, he is completely without limits: like a shepherd looking for lost sheep, he goes toward every human being, no matter how far from God they seem to be.

The shepherd gathers, the world disperses in order to destroy. The bitterness of humiliations and wounds which were never forgiven, hatred and violent oppositions are like wolves that disperse and tear apart the life of communion which Christ has brought. In the face of divisions, Christ did not flee; he remained present even at the heart of the strongest tensions. "He put hatred to death," says Saint Paul (Eph 2,16). Not by an act of force but by loving and forgiving those who mistreated him.

In the image of Christ, each of us is called to bring together and to save no to what divides. Taking risks to avoid or heal divisions (between family members, Christians of the same town, nations) is a way of sharing in the mission of the Good Shepherd according to our own possibilities.

- Who does God entrust to me so that we can live together day after day as reconciled people?
- How can I always remain close to the source of a love that forgives?

To go further:
Matthew 18,12-14; 1 Peter 2,22-25

Some addresses on the way to Vienna

Peru

This is a particularly difficult period on account of the flooding. Torrential rains are falling on the country, but what hurts even more is the passivity with which the people react. Nothing is done to prepare for them. It is only when the water comes up to the door of the houses that people put a sack of sand in front of it, and the authorities do nothing more. In the end, the people abandon their homes and take away with them only a few pieces of clothing, a chicken and two little pigs in a basket, all they have been able to save from the ruins of their house. The fields are devastated, but the people do not despair. Yesterday, when the waters washed away the dike that was protecting a village of a hundred families, they all gathered together on the highest part and asked for a Mass. When the priest remained silent, an old couple spoke up: "We are afraid that this is a punishment from God. But that is not true. We should instead ask ourselves what is the word from God now for us. We used to be united, and then two opposing groups were formed. Is it not time to come back together again?" In the crowd you could feel deep emotion and gratitude.

Lebanon

Our group spent a week in Taizé in 1991 and we want to give some news. Now we are preparing for the special synod for Lebanon. Together with all — lay people, religious and priests — we are meeting to reflect on our problems, on our life, on our church, on our role as young lay persons. There was an important gathering at the end of July with young people from throughout the country on the theme: "Towards a young and missionary Church: Go spread the Gospel to all the nations."

Our activities in the South of Lebanon are continuing, for example training courses. We are preparing to rebuild villages destroyed by the war, and to teach people how to work with children in summer camps. There will also be religious camps for teenagers. For several weeks we will be welcoming young Belgians who have come to help with the rebuilding.

During the summer, we are in communion with those meeting in Taizé. We pray for you, and ask you to pray for us.

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SCOTLAND

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Registration Form

Send in by December 1st either to a contact person (Britain) or (if you live outside Britain) to Taizé. Send to: European meeting, F-71250 TAIZE-COMMUNAUTE, Tel. (+33) 85 50 30 02 (from 9.30 to 12. and from 14.30 to 18.30), Fax (+33) 85 50 30 16.

First Name: _____

Family Name: _____

Address: _____

(with postcode and country)

Tel.: _____ / _____ Occupation: _____ Age: _____

(Circle "Yes" or "No" or complete where necessary)

- I am coming with a group from the town of _____ led by _____

- For adults (over 30 years) and those who cannot sleep on the floor:
I need a bed: yes / no if "yes", say whether you are (please circle):
woman man couple family with ... children disabled person with helper

- I will arrive on 28th December: yes / no (arrival time between 7am and 12pm)

- I will arrive on 26th December (17-30 year olds only): yes / no
to help with (please circle): animation / work / music team.

- N.B. If, for any reason, you are arranging your own accommodation
please send us the address where you will be staying.

- I would like more registration forms (photocopy your own if possible)

Taizé

European Meeting
of young adults
28 December 1992
- 2 January 1993

Vienna

Dates: Arrive Monday, 28 December 1992 between 7am and 12 noon. Depart mid-afternoon Saturday, 2 January 1993.

General Programme: We will be welcomed by families and local church communities throughout the city and its surroundings. In each neighbourhood there will be a morning prayer, then meetings in small groups and visits to people with an involvement in the local area. Each day there will be two common prayers for everyone in the city-centre; in the afternoon, workshops on different themes.

Accommodation: with families and in halls. Simple conditions. Bring sleeping-bag and lightweight mattress. Groups should not arrange their own accommodation in advance as this detracts from the element of sharing.

17 to 29 year olds: three different ways of taking part:

- participation in the life of the parishes
- the silence group (separate accommodation).
- while still participating in the life of the parishes, helping with practical work for the meeting, or "animation", or music for the common prayers. To do this, arrive, if possible, on Saturday, December 26 between 8am and 3pm. It is not possible to arrive on Dec. 27.

16 & 17 year olds can only take part if accompanied by a group leader over 20 for each small group of 7, boys and girls separate; the leader must stay with them. All will participate in the main group (see above) from 28 December on (do not arrive before).

Adults over 30 all participate in the main group (see above) from 28 December on (do not arrive before). Those who cannot stay in the same simple conditions as the young people and need a "real bed" indicate this on their registration form. Those who are accompanying a group of young people are welcome to stay with them if they will accept the same simple accommodation.

Families with children, and people with a disability who need special accommodation should register directly to Taizé -- best by telephone in October or November -- to arrange suitable accommodation.

Your contribution: about GB:£50, IRL:£45 pund, SCAND: DM.170. (for adults count double) which includes a small contribution to the solidarity fund. Covers meals, transport, and other costs, (for those arriving on the 26th. add £3) A more exact estimate will be given in the near future.

Travel 1. from Britain: Coach. Departure from London, early 27th December. Return to London, 3rd January. (Price about £110: Nuneaton Coaches, Whitacre Road, NUNEATON, CV11 6BN. Tel: (0203) 325682 Fax: (0203) 375875). Train: Euroyouth ticket (under 26 yrs.) currently £169 return. Air: many flights available, for example Student Travel Agency (071-581-8873) offer fares: £152 (student), £174 (regular), using DAN-AIR from Gatwick.

2. To arrive on December 26th to help: it is possible to go with a coach leaving Taizé on December 25th (contact Taizé for exact time and price).

3. from other countries: write to Taizé for information.

Preparation: Prayer helps us enter into the inner attitude of a pilgrim setting out to listen to God. You will find suggestions for simple prayer services on pages 2-3.

Ideas for the preparation were given in the last issue of the Letter from Taizé. You can also reflect on the texts for the Johannine hours given in this letter.

Send in your registration form by 1 December at the latest. Further information will be sent in November to those who have already registered.

Those who live in Ireland and Britain send their forms to a contact person (see list). Only the following should register directly to Taizé: families with children, those with special accommodation needs, anyone living outside Britain and Ireland.

What did you think when you learned that the meeting would be in Vienna?

I am very glad that it is possible to have it in Vienna. At present we are welcoming many refugees, particularly in the parishes, and we are doing all we can to give them a new start in life. Welcoming tens of thousands of young people from throughout Eastern and Western Europe will help us to see our reality with hope. I often have the impression that there are many divisions and much incomprehension between the different groups, and some are fearful that hostility towards foreigners is going to grow stronger. So I hope that the preparation and the meeting will be an occasion to learn a lot from each other and to build together.

What will the meeting change in Vienna?

Three years ago, the Berlin wall was torn down and also the iron curtain that was only a few dozen kilometres from us. Now we must tear down the barriers that keep us apart. The meeting will help us get to know one another better, to do something together and to discover that it is not only possible, but also an enrichment, to live together.

The meeting will be characterized by simplicity, and that is essential for us because otherwise we will lose the openness to others.

In my parish, it will change our way of viewing young people, who are often neglected because there are so few of them. Afterwards, we shall certainly be able to put into practice the new ideas we have discovered.

Working all together, "pulling on the same rope" to prepare the meeting, will change the relationship between young people and adults, between the different groups.

The experience of prayer will change many people's lives. In a large city like Vienna people have no time; for the first time, an atmosphere of prayer will be created in the city itself.

I think that we are going to learn to be more open; even the streets of the city will be less anonymous and more joyful. The change of atmosphere throughout the city will be visible to all, even to those who only see the meeting from the outside. What was a kind of utopia will become a reality for a few days.

AT THE END OF THE YEAR...

European Meeting in Vienna

Some young people from Vienna who were in Taizé for a week spontaneously answered some questions.

How do you think young people should prepare themselves before coming?

Certainly through prayer. Each person should ask themselves what joy, what hope, what question they can share with others.

I hope that each person is preparing to let themselves be welcomed, to enter into a new reality, for example to go and live with a family they don't know. I know that this is not easy for everybody, since in Budapest some preferred to stay in schools, but I cannot bear to think that families who make an effort to open their homes will find no one to come and be with them!

Letter from Taizé

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Correspondence: Letter from Taizé,
71250 Taizé-Communauté, France

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